

Garcia, Nestor

From: DTWN [dtwn@mac.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2008 8:04 PM
To: Marshall, Barbara; Dela Cruz, Donovan M; Kobayashi, Ann H.; Garcia, Nestor; Djou, Charles; Apo, Todd K; Okino, Gary; Tam, Rod; Cachola, Romy
Subject: Bill 2 Opposition

Council Members:

I am writing to voice my opposition to pending Bill 2 that will require condominium and apartment complexes to install water meters on each unit to better monitor water usage and presumably lead to water conservation. While we can all agree that water conservation is important, one must look carefully at the unanticipated consequences and costs to such a bill and the vast impacts that it will have. Let me share with you the experiences of one small community. I am on the Board of Directors at Ocean Ridge at Makakilo, a new development less than 2 years old with 68 units. We too were concerned about water usage and made inquiries to have individual meters installed as well as common area meters installed. The cost was staggering and overwhelmingly prohibitive. This project was designed without individual meters and as a consequence to install them now would require significant and costly alterations to the property to modify existing ground plumbing, as well as the costs to install the equipment. At the end of the day we could not in good conscious impose such a heavy financial burden on our homeowners. We have taken measures such as posting water conservation tips, monitoring usage (excessive washing of cars etc) and strictly enforced community rules.

I mentioned unintended consequences - what will this do to the local economy when owners are faces with assessments in the many thousands of dollars - certainly it will be a boon for the plumbing industry, but that is all. What about the many families on the edge - do you want to add to the recession concerns and push more families to the parks? Think of the negative impact to the real estate market in an already slow market. What about other environmental costs - the mere manufacturing and shipping of all this equipment will spew more pollution into the air.

I urge the Committee members to put the topic of the day partisan e-movement politics aside and do what is right for both Hawaii, Hawaii residents and the environment. If such a bill is warranted, it must apply only to new construction - the minimal cost of installation during initial development and construction is minimal to the overall cost of homes compared to post construction alterations. If for some reason you decide that the hundreds of thousands of units must undergo this rather silly initiative, then significant tax benefits to those owners must follow to defer and absorb the devastating economic impact to the homeowners.

Bills like this make nice headlines and appeal to the vocal minority, but passage will surely lead to action at the polls at the next election by the often silent majority. That is most definitely the case if we later find that the proponents of this bill accepted any campaign contributions from any of the plumbing related companies that stand to gain.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

David Harrison
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